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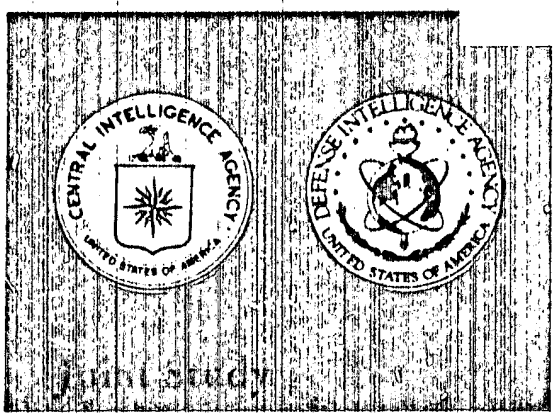

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Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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April 10, 1975

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SURVEY OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA*

(This report covers the period March 27 - April 9, 1975)

The Key Points

- The South Vietnamese lost Da Nang, Qui Nhon, and Nha Trang and almost half of their combat forces in the hectic evacuation of the northern coast.

- Three strategic reserve divisions moved into South Vietnam during the period and another is preparing to deploy, raising to seven the number of divisions North Vietnam has committed this year.

- Communist regular combat forces in South Vietnam have increased to 237,000, compared to 193,000 government troops, marking the first time the Communists have outnumbered South Vietnamese combat forces.

- Very heavy personnel infiltration continues. The total of 123,000 infiltrators so far this dry season is fast approaching the 136,000 troops sent south during the 1971/72 cycle.

- Hanoi is markedly strengthening its air defenses in northern and central South Vietnam and flying aircraft to Hue and Da Nang.

- [redacted] COSVN has now changed its policy and that 1975 will be the year of decision. Recent North Vietnamese unit deployments indicate that heavy fighting in MR 3 is imminent.

- The Khmer Communists are sending large numbers of reinforcements to the Phnom Penh area and the capital's collapse appears imminent.

- A discussion of the status of the Cambodian government's combat divisions is at Annex B.

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* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Preface

This report summarizes evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

DETAILS

I. Infiltration and Redeployment of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

Personnel Infiltration

1. Hanoi continues to send large numbers of troops south -- more than 1,000 men per day -- both to augment its forces in southern South Vietnam and to strengthen its hold over the northern two-thirds of the country.

Comparative Starts of Troops from North Vietnam

	1972/73	1973/74
Total regular infiltration cycle, Sep 1-Jun 30	94,000	94,500
	1973/74	1974/75
Total regular infiltration starts, Sep 1-Apr 9	79,000	122,500

2.

3.

4. the Ministry of Communications and Transportation has announced that military deferments for technical and professional workers will be restored. Nevertheless, training camps are still being filled, and infiltration will continue through the remainder of the 1974/75 cycle.

Redeployments

North Vietnam

5. The NVA 320B Division has arrived in South Vietnam, and elements have been identified in the Hue area. Moreover, Hanoi, intent on maintaining pressure on South Vietnamese forces, also is rapidly moving a senior command headquarters and three additional infantry divisions into South Vietnam. This brings the number of divisions committed since early January to seven – with some 60,000 troops.

6.

7. A likely destination for these divisions is southern South Vietnam. Their arrival in the southern part of the country would sharply tilt the military balance in favor of the Communists. Most of the corps could reach the Saigon area in less than a month.

Deployment of North Vietnamese Strategic Reserve Divisions

Division	Current Location	Strength
968[1]	Central highlands	7,000
341	Northern MR 3	6,000
316	Southern MR 2	7,000
320B	Thua Thien-Quang Nam Provinces	10,000
312	MR 1	10,000
338	DMZ area	10,000
308	North Vietnam	10,000

1. Because of its traditional location in southern Laos, the NVA 968th Division is not normally considered part of Hanoi's strategic reserve. Nonetheless, it is included in this table because it represents the movement of an integral division into South Vietnam.

8. In addition, Hanoi is markedly strengthening and expanding its air defense forces in South Vietnam.

9. The relocation of these air defense units is intended to provide protection of recently captured South Vietnamese air fields, including Hue and Da Nang. Their deployment augments the current 24,000-man air defense force in the south by at least 7,000 troops.

South Vietnam

10. North Vietnamese units within South Vietnam are continuing to shift into coastal areas evacuated by ARVN and are adjusting their forces for further activity in the southern part of the country.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam -

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA[1]	RVNAF[2]
237,000	193,000

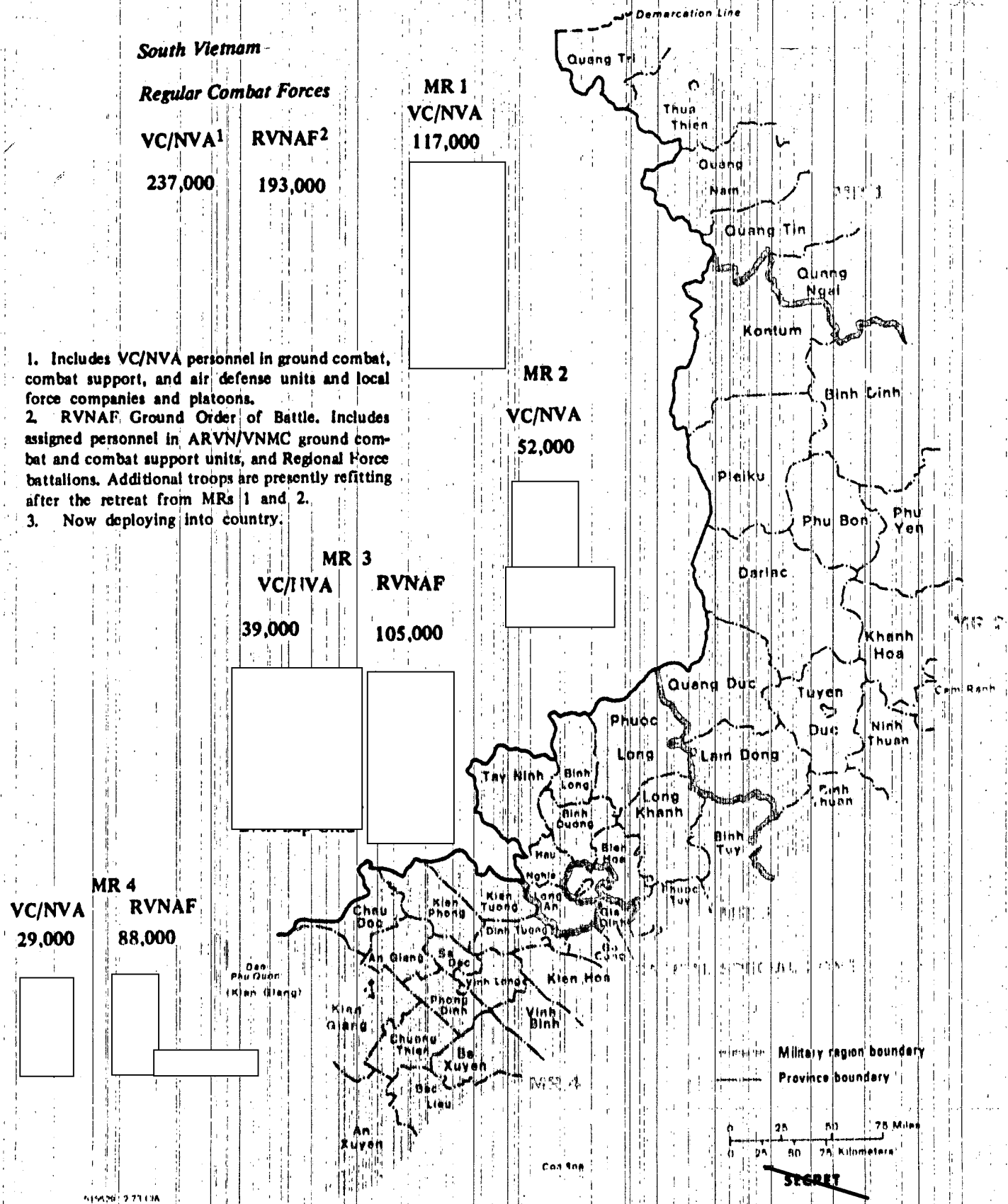
MR 1
VC/NVA
117,000

MR 2
VC/NVA
52,000

MR 3
VC/NVA **RVNAF**
39,000 **105,000**

MR 4
VC/NVA **RVNAF**
29,000 **88,000**

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.
2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Additional troops are presently refitting after the retreat from MRs 1 and 2.
3. Now deploying into country.



11.

12. The North Vietnamese have also been consolidating territory along coastal MR 2. The NVA 3d Division has been taking inventory of captured equipment in Qui Nhon City and other parts of Binh Dinh Province, and elements of the NVA 968th Division have moved into neighboring Phu Yen Province, where they probably are engaged in similar activity.

13 In southern South Vietnam, the entire NVA 341st Division apparently is now located in MR 3. Elements of this division were moving through the DMZ just over a month ago. Since then, prisoners from the 273d Regiment, 341st Division, have been captured in Binh Long Province The arrival of the entire 341st Division in southern South Vietnam raises the number of Communist infantry divisions in MRs 3 and 4 to eight.

14. Northeast of Saigon, elements of three divisions – the NVA 6th, 7th, and 341st Divisions – are continuing to pressure government positions, including Xuan Loc, the capital of Long Khanh Province. Northwest of Saigon, recent Communist redeployments have shifted the focus from Tay Ninh to the northern Delta and provinces west of Saigon.

[redacted]

15. In MR 4, Communist units are increasingly focusing on Can Tho City in Phong Dinh Province. [redacted]

16. On the South Vietnamese side, hasty retreats, disintegration of discipline, and continued Communist pressure led to the effective elimination of nearly all of ARVN's combat forces in the northern two military regions. In addition to the loss of almost all of the ARVN 23d Division and eight ranger groups in the MR 2 highlands in mid-March, the South Vietnamese have now lost the ARVN 22d Division and most of the 3d Airborne Brigade in coastal MR 2. In MR 1, four ranger groups – the 11th, 12th, 14th, and 15th – and four divisions – the 1st, 2d, 3d, and Marine -- also have been almost entirely lost. Of the more than 50,000 South Vietnamese main combat forces in MR 1, only about 16,000 were evacuated from Da Nang before the Communists gained complete control of the city and the region on March 29.

17. Of the troops successfully extracted from Da Nang, some 8,000 are Marines, 4,000 are members of the ARVN 2d Division, and 2,000 belong to the ARVN 3d Division. One of the Marine brigades – the 468th – is still intact and has been sent to the Marine training center at Tu Duc to reequip and subsequently provide security for Saigon. Another brigade – the 258th – is being reconstituted from the other remaining elements and some recruits at Vung Tau in Phuoc Tuy Province, where the Marines have established their new headquarters. The 2d Division is being reorganized near Ham Tan, the capital of Binh Tuy Province in eastern MR 3. The MR 3 commander plans to deploy one regiment of the division to Phan Rang in Ninh Thuan Province – now the northernmost capital still under South Vietnamese control. The 1st and 3d Divisions will not be reconstituted; instead its survivors will be used as replacements for other ARVN units.

18. The South Vietnamese are attempting to strengthen their tenuous hold on Phan Rang by dispatching the 2d Airborne Brigade from Saigon. Reportedly, it will be joined by several thousand survivors from the ARVN 2d and 22d Divisions as soon as they can be reorganized into effective units.

19. In other troop movements, the South Vietnamese have realigned their forces within MR 3. All but one regiment of the ARVN 25th Division have moved out of Tay Ninh City to the southern Tay Ninh -- northern Hau Nghia Province area. Moreover, major elements of the 3d Armored Brigade have shifted eastward to Long Khanh Province to meet the growing threat there. In late March, the 7th Regiment of the ARVN 5th Division rejoined the rest of the division in Binh Duong Province by shifting east from southern Tay Ninh. In addition, the 48th Regiment of the ARVN 18th Division returned from southern Tay Ninh to Long Khanh Province, placing the entire division in this province. To partially offset the departure of the 7th and 48th Regiments, the 32d Ranger Group, recently withdrawn from An Loc in Binh Long Province, was sent to southern Tay Ninh. Finally, the 12th Regiment of the ARVN 7th Division has been deployed from from MR 4 in response to new acitivity in Long An Province in western MR 3.

20. As a result of the heavy losses suffered by the South Vietnamese over the past two weeks, South Vietnam's main combat forces organized in active units now number only 107,000 men. Another 86,000 troops are in territorial force battalions, which raise South Vietnam's total regular combat forces to 193,000. Communist regular combat forces in the south have increased to 237,000 as a result of the infiltration of three strategic reserve divisions and air defense units. This is the largest number of regular combat troops in the south ever and marks the first time the Communists outnumber the government's combat forces.

Cambodia

21. The Khmer Communists (KC) have moved several major combat units toward Phnom Penh and apparently will shift additional forces there as they prepare for an all-out attack against the capital.

22. In late March, the KC 12th Brigade -- which had been operating along the lower Mekong below Neak Luong -- moved to the upper Bassac area south

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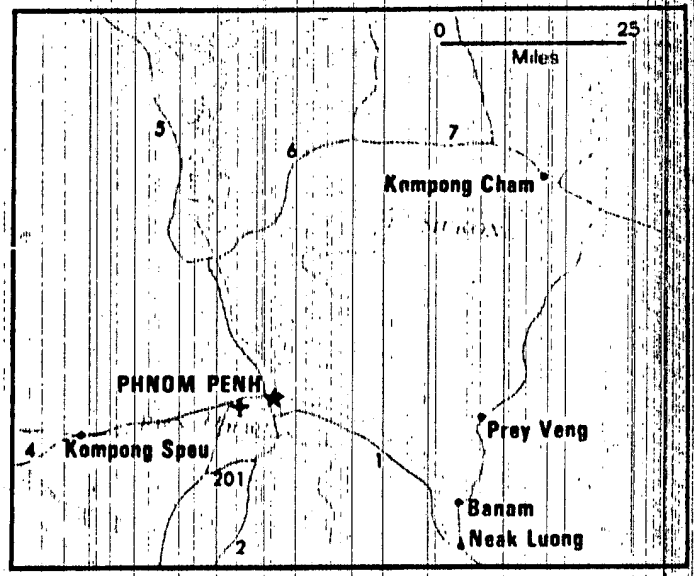
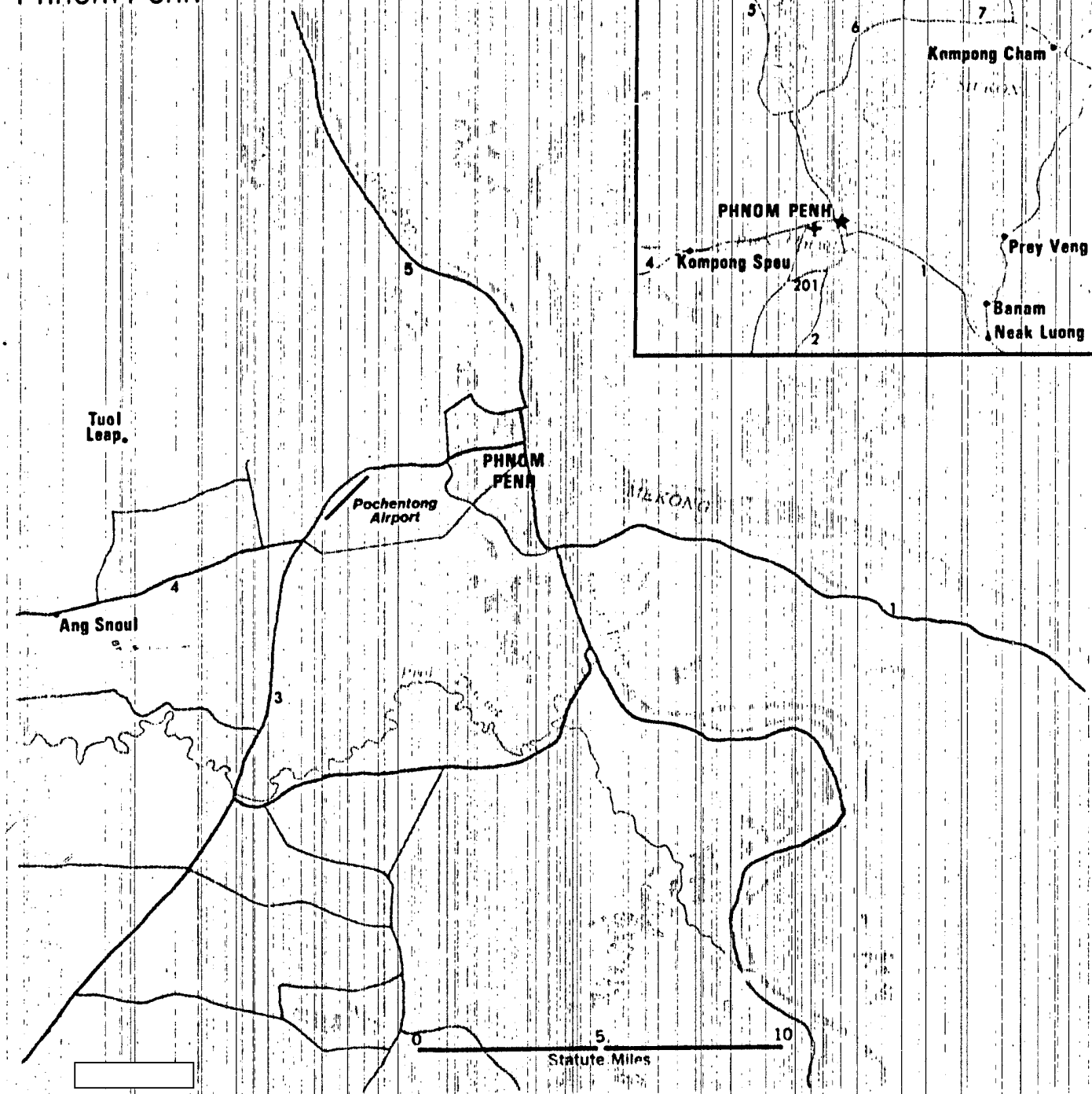
Phnom Penh





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of Phnom Penh to join the KC 11th Brigade. Present indications are that these units will attempt to penetrate government defenses in this area in preparation for direct ground assaults on Phnom Penh.

23. [redacted] the KC are moving their 2d Division from the Neak Luong area to the capital. Two other KC regiments along the lower Mekong – the 126th Infantry and the 175th Heavy Weapons – also are available to be relocated northward. CIA believes these redeployments will increase KC combat strength in the capital area to about 35,000 troops, compared with some 45,000 government troops. DIA, however, believes a KC strength of 25,000 to 27,000 more accurately reflects the threat to Phnom Penh. This figure does not include insurgent forces in the Oudong/Lovek area and reflects the high casualties the KC are believed to have sustained in the capital area.

II. Combat Activity

South Vietnam

24. The South Vietnamese lost the remainder of the northern coast during the past two weeks, including the major population centers of Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Tuy Hoa, and Nha Trang. The military installation at Cam Ranh also fell during the period. The Communists now control the entire coast of South Vietnam north of Phan Rang and have captured a total of 17 provinces in the south since the beginning of the year. The South Vietnamese maintain tenuous holds on Phan Rang and Phan Thiet – their last two provincial capitals in southern MR 2. In southern South Vietnam, attention shifted to the southern and eastern parts of MR 3, where Communist units launched heavy attacks against the capitals of Long An and Long Khanh Provinces.

25. [redacted] COSVN has issued new instructions for future military activity. The instructions state that the Communists now anticipate total victory in 1975. Initially, the Communists are to concentrate on Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia, and Binh Duong Provinces, leading to the collapse or defeat of the South Vietnamese government. Another [redacted] report states that the Communists plan to launch a three-pronged attack against Saigon itself.

Cambodia

26. The pressure on Phnom Penh's defenses is increasing, especially northwest of the city and on the east bank of the Mekong. Moreover, KC forces reportedly

have moved within 120-mm mortar and 75-mm recoilless rifle range of Pochentong Airfield. They also have stepped up shellings from rockets and 105-mm howitzers, causing increased damage to Khmer Air Force planes and facilities.

27. Southeast of Phnom Penh, government units on the west bank of the Bassac River have given up ground in the face of increased Communist pressure. Elements of FANK's 9th Division have taken over defense of Route 1. Despite this reinforcement, however, government troops are not expected to contain a concentrated KC attack on Phnom Penh from the south.

28. The Communists continue to make inroads south of the northern dike in the northwest sector. The deteriorating situation in this area has prompted the government to reorganize its command and control structure, but unless reinforcements can be obtained to build up understrength combat units, degradation of its defenses will continue. West of Prek Phnou, the Communists have penetrated government defense lines. FANK forces halted the advance but have not been able to close the gap. As a result, the KC now will be able to pressure government positions along Route 5.

29. Southwest of the capital the KC have forced the abandonment of several positions on Route 4. A new defense is being set up in the vicinity of Ang Snoul. The Communists have been increasing their pressure in this area and heavier attacks are expected soon. On the east bank opposite Phnom Penh, KC attacks forced the withdrawal of government units, apparently without orders. An extended stretch of the Mekong now is held by the KC, who are in an improved position to rocket the capital.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

New NVA Air Defense Units Identified

30. Hanoi is forming several new air defense units in North Vietnam.

31.

North Vietnamese Flights to South Vietnam

32. Since April 6, North Vietnamese transports and helicopters have made almost daily flights to Hue and Da Nang air fields in South Vietnam. these flights have involved the airlifting of personnel of the NVA 1st Corps.

NVA Radar Capabilities Expanded in Northern South Vietnam

33. on March 26 indicated the presence of FLAT FACE and SIDE NET radars in the vicinity of Da Nang air field. The former is commonly used by the NVA for early warning and aircraft acquisition by SA-2 and SA-3 units, while the latter is used primarily to determine altitude. Both have been located in Quang Tri Province previously, but this is the first time they have been detected this far south. Their deployment to the Da Nang area extends Communist ground control intercept capability to within an 80-mile radius of Da Nang and indicates the presence of a SAM regiment.

34. In addition, a SPOON REST radar was identified in western Kontum Province in MR 2 This radar is mounted on a truck and is a highly mobile early warning radar and SAM acquisition system.

Status of Stocks in Phnom Penh

35. Stocks of rice, petroleum, and ammunition continue to decline. The following tables show Cambodian government stocks of the critical supplies in Phnom Penh and comparative deliveries via the Mekong and airlift to the capital in 1974 and 1975.

Critical Stocks in Phnom Penh
April 9, 1975[1]

	Stocks (Metric Tons)	Days of Supply	Daily Consumption Rate (Metric Tons)
Rice	6,400	10	645
Petroleum	4,400	14	327
Ammunition	5,200	12	433

1. Data are approximate.

Deliveries to Phnom Penh

Metric Tons

	Jan 1 - Apr 9, 1974[1]	Jan 1 - Apr 9, 1975	
	Mekong	Mekong	Airlift
Total	181,100	18,050	52,800
Rice	84,300	6,750	21,900
Petroleum	48,700	5,300	9,500
Ammunition	48,100	6,000	21,400

1. Data concerning air deliveries for this period last year are not readily available, but it is estimated that deliveries by air accounted for no more than 10% of total imports for all of 1974.

ANNEX A

INFILTRATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL TO THE SOUTH

The number of North Vietnamese combat troops and specialists who have infiltrated since the January 27, 1973, cease-fire accord now totals 300,000. Most of these -- 275,000 -- have started south since then, while the remaining 25,000 were already in the pipeline as of the date of the settlement. The table shows the number of North Vietnamese troops starting south, by destination, since January 1, 1973.

Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined for South Vietnam, Southern Laos, and Cambodia Since January 1, 1973

	COSVN	B-3 Front	MR 5	MR Tri-Thien	Unspecified Area/SVN	Southern Laos/ MR 559	Total
Total	105,000	40,000	38,500	28,500	15,500[2]	40,000	267,500

ANNEX B

STATUS OF FANK'S DIVISIONS

Declining troop strengths, increasing desertions, low morale, poor leadership, and deteriorating equipment have brought the combat effectiveness of FANK's five divisions to a critically low level. These divisions and the approximately 20,000 other combat troops in the capital area are not capable of sustaining the defense of Phnom Penh much longer, and their collapse appears imminent.

FANK's manpower level is declining as combat losses and numerous desertions outpace the haphazard conscription program's ability to provide recruits. Manpower losses from January 1 to April 1 for all FANK forces totaled 22,300, including 6,600 deserters. Attempts to fill out combat units by transferring headquarters and support personnel to the front lines is proving unsuccessful, as have similar attempts in the past. Out of the 10,000 desk soldiers planned to be assigned to front-line combat units, only 3,200 to date have received specific orders. Because the desertion rate is high among such troops, however, many of the 3,200 will probably never report to their assigned units.

The problems of battle fatigue and the lack of pay combine to keep FANK morale low. FANK units that have been in near-constant combat since January 1, such as the 7th Division, have little will to fight anymore. Many FANK officers lack the dynamism and imagination needed to be effective in combat. Those who are capable are too often frustrated by senior officers. Divisiveness, indecision, and delays characterize the FANK General Staff and often result in poorly planned uncoordinated operations.

Equipment losses are also degrading FANK's combat effectiveness. For example, of the five divisions' 70 armored personnel carriers (APCs) only 44 were operational as of mid-March. Moreover, the pace of combat is wearing out these vehicles faster than proper maintenance can be performed. They are not being replaced, because US military aid funds have been used almost exclusively for the purchase of ammunition. FANK has come to rely heavily on the APCs for quick reaction to KC attacks. Their declining availability is seriously degrading FANK's combat effectiveness.

Almost 25,000 troops are in the five divisions, but only 17,000 are combat personnel – troops in infantry and artillery battalions and armored personnel carrier squadrons. The level of combat personnel is more than 50% below the authorized

level. On the other hand, about 8,000 are headquarters and support personnel, only 15% below the authorized level. Moreover, there are some overstrength headquarters units, whereas not one combat unit is even at full strength. The following table provides the strength of FANK's five divisions:

Strengths of FANK Divisions

Division	H.Q. and Support Personnel	Combat Personnel	Total Strength
Total	7,900	16,700	24,600
1st	1,700	3,300	5,000
2d	1,700	3,500	5,200
3d	1,500	4,700	6,200
7th	1,000	1,700	2,700
9th	2,000	3,500	5,500

The 7th Division is not combat effective. It bore the brunt of the KC offensive northwest of the capital area in January and suffered extensive losses. One brigade has been deactivated and the two remaining are severely understrength.

FANK's 1st Division, which defends the southern approaches to Phnom Penh, is considered to be a marginally effective combat unit. Its foremost deficiency is that it is seriously understrength and suffers from having a large number of inexperienced recruits. As a result, the division is plagued by low morale, a high desertion rate, and an unwillingness by the troops to maintain defensive positions.

The 2d Division defends the area southeast of Phnom Penh where there has been little combat so far this year. It can be considered combat effective when compared with other divisions, even though two of its brigades have erratic combat records and are as capable of rapid retreat as they are of putting up stiff resistance.

FANK's 3d Division has fought well this year in defending the western approaches to Phnom Penh, but it has lost a substantial number of experienced company commanders, affecting operations adversely. These setbacks, as well as constant combat since February, have sapped the enthusiasm and aggressiveness of the 3d Division. Although still operating as an integral unit, its defensive lines are stretched thin.

The 9th Division can be considered combat effective, although it has never been fully constituted nor fought as an integral unit. It has three brigades and a large division headquarters but lacks its own support elements, having no APCs or artillery. The division apparently has recently been assigned responsibility for Route 1 southeast of Phnom Penh, where earlier in the year one of its brigades was decisively defeated by attacking KC troops. In general, the brigades of the 9th Division have one of the poorest combat records of any to the FANK divisions.